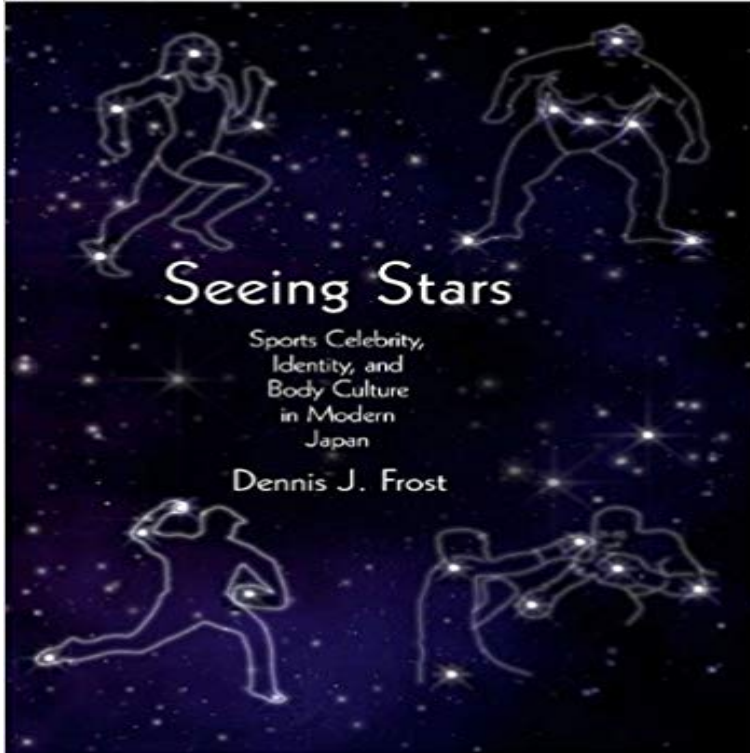


Seeing Stars: Sports Celebrity, Identity, and Body Culture in Modern Japan (Harvard East Asian Monographs)



In *Seeing Stars*, Dennis J. Frost traces the emergence and evolution of sports celebrity in Japan from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries. Frost explores how various constituencies have repeatedly molded and deployed representations of individual athletes, revealing that sports stars are socially constructed phenomena, the products of both particular historical moments and broader discourses of celebrity. Drawing from media coverage, biographies, literary works, athletes memoirs, bureaucratic memoranda, interviews, and films, Frost argues that the largely unquestioned mass of information about sports stars not only reflects, but also shapes society and body culture. He examines the lives and times of star athletes including sumo grand champion Hitachiyama, female Olympic medalist Hitomi Kinue, legendary pitcher Sawamura Eiji, and world champion boxer Gushiken Yokoo--demonstrating how representations of such sports stars mediated Japan's emergence into the putatively universal realm of sports, unsettled orthodox notions of gender, facilitated wartime mobilization of physically fit men and women, and masked lingering inequalities in postwar Japanese society. As the first critical examination of the history of sports celebrity outside a Euro-American context, this book also sheds new light on the transnational forces at play in the production and impact of celebrity images and dispels misconceptions that sports stars in the non-West are mere imitations of their Western counterparts.

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